

Part of the New Year, Part of the New You: Authentic Appreciation

While you're considering resolutions for the New Year, I've got one that is easy to implement, costs no money and has great potential benefits for your life at work. So if you're not going to resolve to do something more traditional or difficult like quitting smoking, losing weight, exercising regularly (not that you shouldn't do these), then consider Authentic Appreciation.

Authentic Appreciation is a way to build BRIDGES to develop sound and productive work relationships. Authentic Appreciation is so simple that is often overlooked. It is truly not effective to think, "That goes without saying!"

The Social Sciences show:

- None of us lives up to our potential. It is speculated that we use only about one-tenth of our capacity for creative thinking and accomplishment.
- Positive environments produce lasting growth, learning and change.
- Positive self-concept + self-confidence = Success.

So you can take an active role in developing the potential of those around you to create personal and organization success. You can make a positive difference in your own work environment.

So what is Authentic Appreciation? How do you do it? First, let me tell you what it is not. By Authentic Appreciation, I am not talking about insincere flattery. Authentic Appreciation is not about making hollow compliments aimed at getting you something in return. For example, Authentic Appreciation does not mean telling the boss how much you like her new hairstyle when you really think she looks like she just came back from a fast trip inside of a wind tunnel.

By Authentic Appreciation, I mean authentic comments driven by your real search for the unique strengths, attributes and talents that others possess. It is about looking for and making an effort to share your positive observations with another person. For example, I might notice and tell my partner how he is so **dependable**. Then, I can explain how wonderful it is for me to know that he does what he says he is going to do and I don't have to spend time and worry in following up.

I believe the reinforcement of positive qualities is one way to encourage their continued existence. I want people around me to build on their strengths and not discount them. The stronger the people, the stronger an organization can be. People hear enough of what they aren't doing well. Authentic Appreciation is one way to balance that scale. Oftentimes, we are uncomfortable receiving Authentic Appreciation because we are not used to hearing it. In those cases, I just suggest that the person respond with a simple, "thank you", and then explain my intention in giving Authentic Appreciation.

So are you interested in making Authentic Appreciation a part of the New You in the New Year? Well, set a simple goal to look for and mention the positives you see and experience as part of your daily work habits. For example, give one Authentic Appreciation per day to someone at work. Try this for one week. I'll bet you gain a positive new habit, a part of the New You. Remember, these deposits of good will and acknowledgement serve as a foundation to create deep and more trusting relationships.

Finally, consider this benefit of Authentic Appreciation. When you need to have a tough conversation with someone at work, chances are greater that your comments and observations will be heard as caring, rather than harsh criticism because you have consistently demonstrated that you also see many positive qualities. And, tough observations are more easily accepted.

So will YOU accept the challenge to create a New Part of You for the New Year? If YOU do, I'd like to authentically appreciate your **openness to growth and personal effectiveness**.

Happy New Year!

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